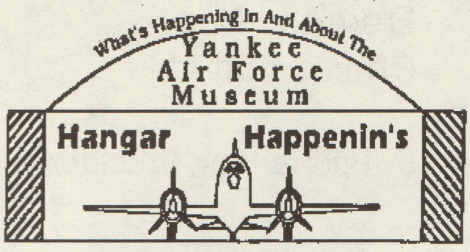

Dec 1999

Yankee Air Museum P.O. Box 590 Belleville, MI 48112 Tel. (734) 483 - 4030

Hangar Happenin's
is a monthly newsletter
for the **Yankee Air Force**

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Treasurer: Nancy Lockwood

Board Members:
Deane Baker, Tony Hurst, Erwin Stirnweis, Paul Chu Lin, George Whitfield, George Davis, Clayton Jones, J. D. Hill, Ray Jackson, Ray Hunter, Vic Bonfiglio

Meeting Schedule
1st Wednesday of Month – 7:30 PM
General Membership

3rd Wednesday of Month – 7:30 PM
Board Meeting
Public Welcome

2nd Wednesday even-numbered months
7:30 PM in the "Doghouse"
Flyable Aircraft Meeting
Everyone Welcome

MUSEUM HOURS
10 – 4 TUESDAY-SATURDAY
12 – 4 SUNDAY
Closed Mondays and Holidays

From the Editors' Desk:

We have come to the end of another year. This end of the year is special as it is also the end of a century and a millennium. This has been a typical year here at the hangar: some good, some bad. We lost some very special friends this year and they will be missed by all. We are the better for having known them and that brings some comfort to us. We are also in the midst of an internal disagreement that is difficult for some to understand and for others to accept. We make no other comment other than we are sure that OUR organization will survive and hopefully be better for it.

On the good side, we made many new friends this year. It has been a pleasure to see the enthusiasm that seems to be rampant around the hangar. Many of the people who have chosen to join this organization have already found a place where they can help and are contributing much to what makes what we are about so special. We of the *HH* staff are, as always, very grateful for all the kind comments made about our efforts. We must, in all honesty, admit that a great deal of the credit must go to the membership of this organization. If it were not for you submitting articles for publication or giving us some fine ideas, it would be impossible for us to give you the kind of quality newsletter you deserve. All of the staff agree that we have grown and become better because of the membership, so give yourselves a gold star and several 'at-a-boys for a job well done.

So what can we look forward to in the new century and millennium? If the kind of people who are now involved and continue to get involved in this organization are an indication, we are headed for great things. This organization has, due to the hard work and dedication of its members, come a long way. We have a long distance to travel yet until we become what the founders envisioned; but because of the people of this organization it will happen.

From all of the staff, we want to wish each and every one of you a safe and happy holiday season. Remember those we lost this year and in the past and be grateful that we knew and loved them. Keep the faith, remember it is always darkest before the storm, but no matter what man or nature throws at us, together we will continue to grow and to prosper. That makes being a part of this organization so special. Thanks!

Bob Seaton aka Captain Crabby

Our internet address is:
http://www.yankeeairmuseum.org
Our e-mail address is:
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Hangar Happenin's e-mail address is:
seaton@provide.net

Barry has his Brain Busters
and now, as a public service, we have
"*A Word or Two with Miss Pellings*"

Here's a handy way
to remember how to spell
the commonly misspelled words

HANGAR / HANGER

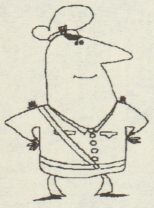
Use "A" for airplanes
and "E" for everything else

Visitors to the Museum
in October 1999
were from 23 United States (including Alaska!)
& from the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany,
Belgium, Poland, Australia, England, & Canada

Past Dates of Interest

2 Dec 1939	1940 Winter Olympics cancelled
2 Dec 1971	Russian *Mars 3* makes 1st Mars landing
7 Dec 1941	Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
9 Dec 1941	1st American bombing mission of WW II (B-17s bomb shipping near Philippines)
11 Dec 1914	Radio messages received over 10-mile distance by US Army airplane
14 Dec 1972	Man last walked on Earth's moon (*Apollo 17* astronaut Gene Cernan)
15 Dec 1964	1st AC-47 enters combat in Vietnam
17 Dec 1903	First powered flight by Orville Wright
20 Dec 1941	*Flying Tigers* take action against Japan
20 Dec 1989	F-117A Stealth Fighter used for 1st time in *Operation Just Cause* over Panama
21 Dec 1944	HH Arnold became General of the Army
22 Dec 1964	1st flight of SR-71 *Blackbird*
25 Dec 336	Christmas appears on Roman calendar
28 Dec 1948	12 USAF pilots rescued from Greenland ice cap by C-47 using rocket boosters !
29 Dec 1988	1st F-15E delivered to USAF

Winner of the November meeting
50/50 drawing was
JIM DIETRICH
who donated his winnings to the
Building Fund



From the Head - Office, That Is !

by Bill Hanney, President

In this edition of ***HH***, I'll try to leave out all references to lawsuits & other unpleasantness. We do have some information that will inspire you to come back with your opinions. I hope you will like it and respond favorably.

We have known for some time that we are bursting at the seams and must come up with more space. We also know that we would like to move the artifact display rooms to a first floor location for our handicapped visitors. In essence, a new building is necessary.

In order to satisfy that need a whole new plan was developed which, over time, will result in a new museum, while retaining our present building.

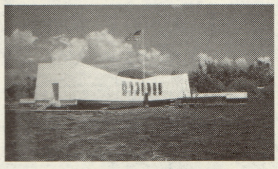
The first phase of that plan will be a new hangar and exhibition building which will be similar to the model we have on display in the entrance. Some dimensions may change, certain features may be different.

We hope to meet the criteria by which the County would like us to bring tourists and employment to the airport. In order to accomplish this, we have constructed a plan that will encompass several buildings, and include our new hangar, educational facilities, meeting rooms, a theater and all the other attributes of the new style and type of museum being constructed today.

In addition to new buildings, we'll be looking at a new organization structure to limit liability and to assist in raising the necessary funds. It's a huge undertaking and we'll try to keep you up to date as it develops. By the way—you'll all have a job in the new plan—same pay structure!

Send us your comments.

Connie's Corner



REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR: WHO COULD FORGET?

December 7, 1941 quoting President Franklin Roosevelt

"... a date which will live in infamy."

Yankee Members — December 7, 1941, some of you perhaps weren't born yet, but the majority of us were. Many of us were in our teens or early twenties. For those of us who lived through that time in history, most can vividly remember where we were, what we were doing, and how we reacted to the news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

In New York, a championship NFL football game was taking place in Yankee Stadium. An announcement came over the loudspeaker for all service men to please return to their bases and that all leaves were cancelled.

December 7, 1941, was a clear but cold day in Detroit, Michigan. Many people were out starting their Christmas shopping.

I remember that I was fourteen years old and went to the Civic Theater in Detroit with a schoolmate to see, once again, *"The Wizard of Oz."* I had seen it in 1939, but before we had re-runs and videos, it sometimes would be several years before a movie would be re-released again. During the movie, all of a sudden, the house lights came on and the theater manager announced for everyone to go home to their families as the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor. I was puzzled...where and what was "Pearl Harbor?" My friend and I had to walk home (about a mile and a half) because the buses were not running. When I got home, all of my family was already gathered around the radio listening to President Roosevelt.

My husband Joe was seventeen years old and was at a friend's home with several neighborhood boys, lifting weights. When they heard the news about the attack, all went home — some mentioning before leaving that they were going to enlist the next day.

Why the sneak attack (I asked myself)? I remember reading in the newspaper back in July 1941, that the newly inaugurated President Roosevelt (his 3rd term) did place an embargo on Japan on shipments of scrap iron, gasoline and Japanese silk. He also ordered assets to be frozen; but I didn't realize our relations with Japan were so tense.

The air attack on Pearl Harbor destroyed 19 ships (many by sinking) and claimed 3,000 lives. The Japanese lost 28 planes and 3 midget subs. The phrase, "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," was uttered by Howell M. Forgy, a chaplain on the U.S. Cruiser *New Orleans*, while sweating sailors kept up with continuing anti-aircraft fire while under attack at Pearl Harbor. Forgy helped keep their spirits up with this phrase.

Yes, for those who lived through it, we shall always, ***REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR!***

Bill Rodgers' Aviation Axioms

No one has ever collided with the sky.

An Aircraft Meant to Be Flown

- Our Flight from England to Thailand

by Ray Hunter WR 02250

I recently received an electronic copy of this photograph that was taken of an aircraft on the flight line at Udorn AB in Thailand in 1968. The aircraft in the photograph is U S Air Force C-47D 50887. I had the pleasure of flying 50887 for approximately two years at RAF Mildenhall, England in the early 60s. My Air Force job at the time was an instructor pilot in the C-47. My first landing in a C-47 was in 50887. In 1965, the war in Southeast Asia was escalating and there was a need for inter-theater cargo aircraft and so approximately 15 C-47s were flown from their bases in Europe to various bases in Thailand and Vietnam. I had the pleasure of flying C-47D 50887 to Thailand from England. Our route of flight was from RAF Mildenhall, England to Chateauroux, France; Naples, Italy; Athens, Greece; Beirut, Lebanon; Dhahran, Saudia Arabia; Masirah Island, Oman; Bombay, India; Madras, India; Rangoon, Burma; Bangkok, Thailand; and finally Udorn, Thailand. The trip took over three weeks with various stops awaiting visas, diplomatic clearances for the crew and the aircraft, and of course favorable wind forecasts, particularly for the over-water flights.

The statement that aircraft are meant to be flown certainly rang true on this flight, we did not have one discrepancy the entire flight. The Aircraft Maintenance Officer at Udorn performed the usual aircraft equipment inventory and inspection and declared 50887 ready for duty. As a matter of fact, a local flight crew flew me and my crew back to Bangkok in

50887 the following day. The flight from Masirah Island to Bombay, India was six and one-half hours over water with the usual 800 gallons of gas on board. We landed in Bombay with over 200 gallons left on board! As I recall we set the propellers to run at around 1800 RPM and our fuel consumption worked out to approximately 80 gallons or so per hour. The aircraft in question was a real workhorse for us in England and the interior was much like our "*Yankee Doodle Dandy*" with troop seats. I regret to say that, according to an aircraft locator service that I subscribe to, the aircraft was lost in Southeast Asia. It could have been lost to combat, a crash, or some other fate unknown to me.

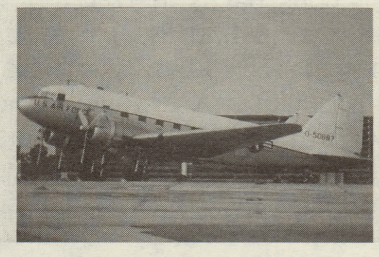


Photo by Donald Plagge, former Crew Chief 50887, Udorn, Thailand

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Ed. Note: The following is from Ben Adams of the Northeast Division. He has had to resign as the 483rd Bombardment Group's chaplain, as he is the president-elect of this group. We hope you enjoy Dr. Ben's final "Holy Smoke", and we hope he will find the time to keep contributing to our newsletter. Our congratulations to Ben on his election.

HOLY SMOKE

by Ben Adams #05814 NE

This is a difficult column for me to prepare this time for sentimental reasons, firstly, because this is probably my last "*Holy Smoke*" as your Chaplain and secondly because the lasting emotional effects of our reunion in Oklahoma City are still with me and my brain is not very organized yet. I am very happy that Harold Leveridge has agreed to take over the reins again as your Chaplain and continue to do the great job he has done in the past.

And of course, I am overwhelmed and deeply honored that you selected me as your President-elect for 2001! And I am very happy that you selected Verne Cole as your president for the new Millennium 2000 because I will be under his tutelage!

And what about our reunion? Though I led the Memorial Service, I believe that I was probably more emotionally involved in this one than in any past Memorial Service. Personally, I had lost a good old friend and former fellow crewmember in 1999 and later came home only to discover that I had lost another one. I associated finding out after a mission about the loss of a best buddy in 1945 when I was only nineteen. The shock grew me up in an instant and through that grief I hopefully became a wiser adult. I was one with you more than ever before in all of our grieving about 35 losses in 1999. Also, the memory of our visit to Buchenburg was still with me at that time last June when I was meditating in front of that bronze memorial plaque the Germans erected in 1998 in tribute to our lost flyers who died in the Memmingen mission in 1944. We grieved for them too and I was with you all in that experience as well. Our guest from Buchenberg, Erhart Ott, in his remarks at the banquet helped us so much to feel that those tragic losses were for a righteous cause.

Do you realize how important grief is in our life's experience? We should never try to avoid that pain because they are really growing pains. If we avoid that pain we repress it in our unconscious filing system and we can never grow beyond it. We then make ourselves insensitive to our relationships and deprive ourselves of closeness and any intimacy with someone else for fear that we might feel pain when we lose them. It's like the soldier who numbs himself and who does not want to know the face and name of his comrades because he knows they will be killed in combat and he would feel the pain of their loss. Therefore he reasons that it is best to not get too close to your comrades in battle. It might hurt. That is both selfish and self serving. Many of us sadly believe in that way of thinking but they only deprive and isolate themselves.

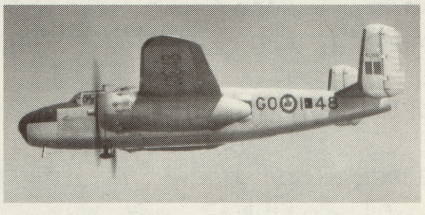
The Scriptures teach, "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." On a crew, we live or die for each other because we are critically important to each other! A family, a marriage, is like a crew in the battle experiences of life. Love means a bond, an attachment to another, an intimacy. In that bond, we experience love, pleasure, and enjoyment of our life in our relationships with one another, in our families, and in marriage but we also experience pain when we lose that bond. We feel pain because we love. If we do not allow ourselves to feel pain, then we disable ourselves from loving!

I'm really looking forward to seeing you all again next year! Pax and shalom!

YAF's B-25D in RCAF Service

Following are excerpts from a letter written to Todd Hackbarth in July 1993 by retired Royal Canadian Air Force pilot John Farnham. Between September 1953 and August 1954, Mr. Farnham flew RCAF Mitchell II KL148, which eventually became the Yankee Air Force's B-25.

Further to my note of June 30, 1993, when I replied to Mr. Stephen Doidge's letter, I wondered at the time why he was interested in one particular aircraft. Your letter of June 23rd explained everything. As an aviation enthusiast and former pilot of KL148, I find the whole subject very exciting and interesting, and have enjoyed digging up my little bit of data on "your" aircraft.



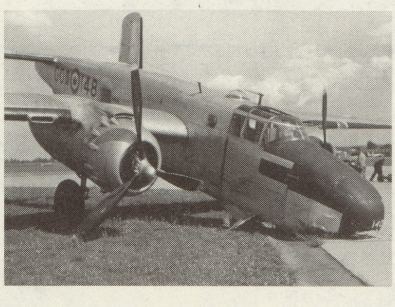
I had scrounged some official RCAF photographs of Mitchell II KL148 while I was in the Air Force. After I received your letter I took them out of an album and had negatives made of two of them, one showing the aircraft in flight, the other showing it after a landing when the nose gear could not be lowered, and which clearly showed that this was KL148. I have enclosed two other photographs showing the damage to the nose from different angles, but I did not have negatives made of these.

I am pleased to donate all four original prints and these two negatives to your museum. I'm sure you will make good use of them. Incidentally, I've kept new reprints for myself.

As you can see from my enclosed photos, KL148 did have a glass nose on it when I flew it in the 1953-1954 era, although the glass was "painted over" to keep the aircraft cooler in summer, since we were using it only for pilot training. The B-25s we were flying then in Trenton were mostly painted over glass nose models, but some were solid nose variety. In your photo of KL148 AU 0 taken at Gimli, Manitoba in 1949, it had the glass nose, too, but unpainted.

From my log book, I flew KL148 58 times for a total of 105 hours 50 minutes, between September 1953 and August 1954. Most all of these trips were from the RCAF Station at Trenton, Ontario since we were training instructors, but I did take this aircraft on a few cross-country trips.

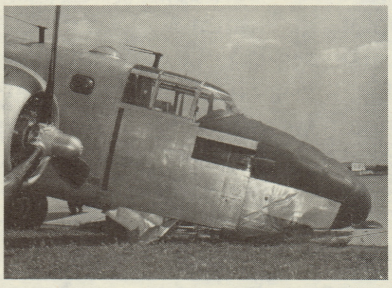
Enclosed are photocopies of my log book sheets from 24 September 1953 (my first flight in KL148) to October 1954. I left Trenton to attend the F-86 Sabre OTU (Operational Training Unit) around 1 October 1954, so the "accident" to KL148 took place sometime between 17 Aug 54 and 1 Oct 54. I was not flying it when it happened, but I did witness it from the ground. Two students were flying but were unable to get the nose gear to extend properly. They tried the emergency lowering system and the usual other tricks to no avail. One pilot then went to the rear and moved the survival gear (Gibson Girl, rations, tent, axe, shovel, etc.) as far to the rear of the aircraft as possible. Then they landed on Runway 24 which was the longest runway available, 6,000' at that time, if my memory is correct. They held up the nose as long as possible, and did not use any brakes. The aircraft was going very slowly when the nose finally came down.



The log book sheets are self-explanatory except for abbreviations peculiar to the RCAF. I will explain and elaborate on these entries. I was a staff flying instructor at the FIS (Flying Instructors School) at RCAF Station Trenton, Ontario. The "students" were generally quit experienced pilots, many with more flying time than I had! We were training them to become flying instructors on the B-25, so they could then go to the Twin Engine Advanced Flying School (AFS) at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. There they would be instructing newly graduated pilots who had not previously flown multi-engine aircraft.

The first page indicates I flew KL148 on 25 Sept 1953, shortly after this aircraft was taken on strength at FIS, Trenton. I was the Captain, shown as "Self." The other pilot was F/O Burton (equivalent of 1st Lieutenant in the USAF). The numbers in the Duty Column are for specific exercises. As I recall, #12 was Take-Offs, #13 was Landings, and #33 was Single-Engine Procedures, The time aloft was one hour and so on. On 26 Sept 1953, I flew with

another instructor from Trenton (TR) to Downsview (ZD), an airfield on the Eastern outskirts of Toronto at that time. From there we took off for a couple of trips on "Bomber Affiliation" exercises, acting as targets for the Air Defence System fighters, which were DeHavilland Vampires. We operated around 20,000' on oxygen for these trips. We always enjoyed these exercises as it was a welcome change from instructing. From Downsview we flew to Malton (YZ), now called Pearson International Airport, Toronto's main airport, then back to Downsview.

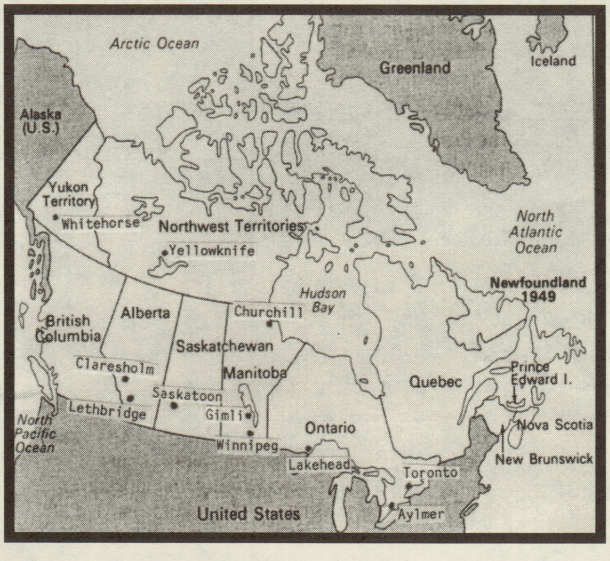


The next day, 27 Sept 1953, we flew an air test. I do not recall this flight from memory, but the letters "W/T" mean "Wireless Telegraphy." We must have had a radio operator on board because of the fighter exercise, but, alas, my memory has failed me on this. Another trip flown on Bomber Affil and then we returned to Trenton.

On 28 Sept 1953, I gave a Solo Check to Gluns and Burton. This would not be solo in the strict sense, but would allow them then to go flying without me, with each taking turns in left seat. Next, on 19th October, I took these same two students on a navigation cross-country trip; this would be a visual nav trip using pilot nav techniques.

29 Oct, #18 was practice instrument flying including ITOs (Instrument Take-Offs). These take-offs were done under the hood, an excellent exercise requiring the student to pay close attention to his compass heading in order not to wipe out runway lights on the edge of the runway!

A Christmas "Training Trip" I remember quite well. Only instructors were permitted to take aircraft away on weekends for "training." F/O Stables was married, with a family in Western Canada, but he was a student about to start the Mitchell Course, so would not be able to obtain an aircraft on his own. I was single at the time, so instead of going to my home in Eastern Canada, got permission to take KL148 to Western Canada with F/O Stables as student under training. On 22 December 53, with several others on board, we flew from Trenton to Winnipeg (WG) Manitoba in five hours and 45 minutes, four hours of which were in cloud. After refueling, we flew on another four hours (including one hour at night) to Claresholm (OM) Alberta. The night was clear and cold, and the 3,100' runway was icy. A long day, but KL148 purred like a kitten the whole way, and I well remember the greaser landing I did from the right seat!



On the 27th of December, we flew first to nearby Lethbridge (QL) for fuel, then on to Lakehead (QT), called Fort William at that time, at the Western end of Lake Superior in four hours and 50 minutes. From there back to home base of Trenton.

... to be continued in the January issue of *Hangar Happenin's ...*

And, Santa, about that glass nose ...

DESERT TREASURES

by Brian Moehring

Recently, Bob Bomar and I took a trip to Chino, California, to visit Carl Scholl and his airplane parts collections. We went with the intent of purchasing a glass nose assembly for the B-25, and, I'm happy to report, were successful. Getting to the desert storage yard proved to be a little adventure, however. The trip started out with a postponed flight from Detroit Metro, and almost ended with a canceled flight from Orange County. Between the mishaps, though, was an excursion to remember.

We flew into Orange County/ John Wayne Memorial airport and got set to drive to Chino, about half an hour away. The traffic actually wasn't too bad, and we made Chino Airport on time. Carl Scholl was waiting there at his hangar, and proceeded to take us on a tour of his facilities there. His company, *Aero Trader*, does a brisk business in the warbird

restoration field, and also parts fabrication. The professional staff, perhaps 12 or 15 people, does a magnificent job; we saw evidence of this in an ongoing B-25 restoration for a certain collector from Florida. We really liked the machine gun replicas they produce, the receivers of which are made from a single casting in aluminum. After some technical machining, these replicas look just like the real thing, even down to fake rifling in the end of the "barrel".

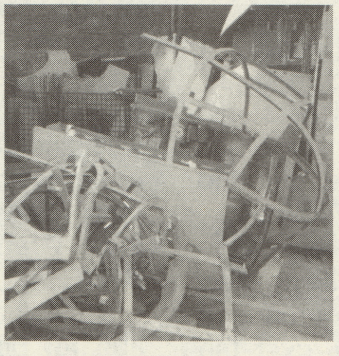
We got down to talking about the nose parts for our B-25. Bob and I were under the impression that his parts in the desert were maybe an hour away. We were told they were four hours away, and the heat of the midday sun would be almost unbearable. Well, that was a bummer, but it ended up working out just right. We spent a little more time at Chino, going through the *'Planes of Fame'* museum and generally looking around. Caught a glimpse of a real Me109, complete with Daimler engine. Carl got a little busy then, as he had scheduled some flights in his B-25 for veterans of the 420th Bomb Group. We stuck around a while, then headed to downtown Chino to check into the hotel.

Sunday ended up being a day off, for the most part. We did a little more sight-seeing, and I even visited one of my sisters in nearby Anaheim. We still planned to go out to the desert, since we wanted a close look at the parts and their condition. Years in the desert could be kind, or not; we weren't sure. Pictures supplied by Todd Hackbarth gave us clues, but we still wanted to get our hands on them. Carl would be busy this day off the airport, and didn't have time to be our guide.

Monday morning dawned bright, and we checked out and headed for *Aero Trader* once more to ask Carl a few more questions. We decided then that we probably didn't have time to make it to the desert and catch our flight to Detroit after all, but Carl assured us we would be getting one of the two best nose pieces he had (he couldn't remember which was which from Todd's pictures). Bob and I were comfortable we would be getting what he said was the best, even at the expense we were paying, since he also had something at stake.

Now comes the fun part of the trip. We get to Orange County, hop on the plane, and take a happy tug ride down the ramp and back. Seems this particular Airbus 320 had computer problems and didn't feel like flying that day. We waited. Waited. Waited. Finally, a gate opened up for our plane to get back to the terminal. All the people on board then tried to get connecting flights, which made for a long line with frayed nerves for some at the ticket counter. Then Bob, ever on his toes with quick thoughts like these, wondered if we could catch the next day's flight, which would give us time to go to the desert. The ticket counter people were happy, and arrangements were made to stay one more day. We were meant to see the parts after all. Bob called Carl for directions, and after the familiar rental car/rush hour driving routine, we were on our way.

It was a nice drive to the land east of San Diego, but it gets dark early now. A portion of our drive near the end was through and down from the mountains. I felt like a slalom course driver, winding through tight turns (when the signs say 15 mph, they mean it!) in the dark. You've got to watch out for the coyotes, too. A little spooky, but pretty neat! The hotel out there looked like something from a Hollywood thriller, but the hosts were very nice, and the room was comfortable. It just seemed like that in the dark, I guess. OK, now we are closer to San Diego, so why bother going back to Orange County? A couple calls got our flight changed, which gave us some time to work with.



The next morning we met Bill, Carl Scholl's parts caretaker. He was very nice, and we talked over a made-to-order breakfast in the *'Blu-In Cafe'* just up the road from the parts near Ocotillo Wells (also called 'The Middle of Nowhere'). Everyone there was friendly, since it just doesn't pay to get all worked up out there in that hot,

dry Southern California landscape.

Bill seemed knowledgeable about the parts Carl has stored there. He toured us around from a home-made utility truck, and told us of movie stars who have bought airplanes from them, late-night souvenir hunters he has chased, the yard full of Corvair automobiles, the B-29 hulks, and boxes and boxes and piles and piles of airplane stuff. We got around to the B-25 nose parts, and were pleasantly surprised to find they are in good condition. None of them had more than slight damage, they aren't corroded, and any of them would make a fine restoration project. Now thoroughly satisfied that Carl did indeed have good parts, we thanked Bill for his tour and headed off to San Diego.

The rest of the trip was uneventful, and the ride was made pleasant by the scenery now visible in the daylight. No problems through the mountains, and the airplane worked this time. The ride was smooth, and came in almost on time. All in all, I have no complaints; the adventure was in finding Desert Treasures.

Demise of the "Stork Club"
by Marsh Button
Navigator, 570th Squadron

The crew of this B-17, prior to our assignment to the ship, had just completed their tour of missions, and assured us that the plane would get us through our tour and not to worry. But, unfortunately, they were wrong. I was only aboard her for four missions (flew one other with another crew and plane). But somehow, over the years, I've developed a certain feeling and sentiment for this ex-hunk of aluminum, steel, rubber and what-have-you. She must have flown a bundle of missions, some milk-runs, some more than mere milk-runs, and some real zingers like Munster, 10 October 1943. The last I saw of here was a section of wing and bits of debris spinning crazily, too close for comfort, about 17,000 ft. over So. Germany.

It was Mission #72 for the 390th, 16 March 1944, Target—Augsburg Messerschmitt factory.

Looking back, on our very first mission to Chartres, 2 March 1944, I had seen a Fort right in front of us get a flak hit and break apart in the middle. Its Tail-gunner had flown across the North Atlantic with us and was a replacement on that crew for that mission. So we knew right away it was all for real.

Anyway, before reaching the target area, we were besieged by Me-110s armed with rockets. I remember one coming head-on through our formation and I got one quick burst at him from my port-side gun. Shortly thereafter, I felt the plane shudder and seem to lose speed. We evidently had taken a hit somewhere aft. No bail-out alarm was given and everything happened quite suddenly. Our Bombardier, Chet Brenizer, raced by me for the escape hatch yelling "Get out!" He never made it, and before I could disconnect and follow, the ship went into a violent spin. I was pinned to the right side of the nose with the guns swinging crazily in their mounts. The last thing I remember was one BIG BANG when the ship exploded. We still had ten 500-lb. demos aboard, but it could have been gas, oxygen tanks or combination. The nose must have popped off like a bottle cap.

When I came to, I was free-falling with back-pack unopened. An eerie feeling to put it mildly. After the bits and pieces of the *Stork* drifted away, I noticed thin undercast below and I saw one other chute in the distance. The ground soon began to become visible so I pulled the ripcord and jolted to reality. A snow-covered field loomed below and I landed backwards ungracefully but thankfully. I was really cock-eyed from the explosion and saw two of everything momentarily. Blood on my Mae West prompted me to take quick check of my personal system. A cut lip and broken little finger plus various bruises seemed relatively insignificant.

Some character, peasant-like in appearance, approached from a farmhouse in the distance and motioned me to follow. My recollection is, he spoke French so could have been drafted laborer or whatever. A woman brought out a basin of water for me to wash the blood from my face. Then a couple of Home-guards, or Volksturm, appeared and told me "Kommen Sie, Amerikaner!"

We proceeded to a small village about a quarter-mile distant, and into a small school building. Our Tail gunner, Bill Thornberg, was already there and we said very little. He had been shot up more than a little and had landed in the village. (Bill was later repatriated to the States after a lengthy stay at Stalag I at Barth.) While waiting there, a Luftwaffe pilot who had been shot down in the same melee came in. He spoke fluent English and said he had attended a university in the USA. To add insult to injury, he held up

a light blue paddle from our ditching dinghy and said, "This is my talisman." When I saw the *Stork's* serial number 42-30783 on the paddle, I casually looked away.

Some time elapsed before our Radio Operator, Vinnie O'Sullivan, was brought in wrapped in his chute and about as white as same. His singed hair indicated fire on board before the plane blew up. Vince said, "I guess we've had it, Lt. Button." The poor kid did in fact, for he died that night in a nearby hospital where we were taken after a long delay. His left arm was hanging by a shred when they carried him in.

The following night I was taken from the hospital to a jail in Goeppingen joining 30 other new POWs including some RAF airmen. Thence, we were taken to Frankfurt where we spent part of a night in the RR station trying to get some sleep on a marble floor strewn with glass, courtesy of recent RAF bombings. Then to Oberursel Interrogation Center for three days solitary, and then, finally, a fair-size group of bedraggled POWs entrained for Stalag Luft III at Sagan, about 90 miles southeast of Berlin.

We arrived at our "resort" the day after about 60 Kriegies had tunneled out of the North Compound, and consequently the German guards were on edge. The old Kriegies told us not to twitch, sneeze, burp, or whatever when we stood daily Appel (headcount).

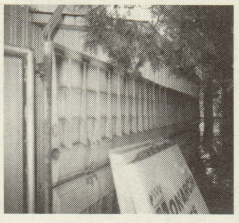
Kriegie life took more than a little adjusting to, but although some individuals took it in stride better than others, overall in many instances American perseverance and ingenuity came to the fore and helped preserve our sanity and hope. The experiences in the camp over 13-1/2 months were a story in themselves. Other accounts by some of our ex-Kriegies have related events of the "exodus" from Stalag Luft III which began on 27 January 1945. After a rough road and rail trip, we arrived in Moosburg (a few miles north of Munich) on the 2nd of February, there to enjoy the comforts (?) of Stalag VII-A until our liberation by Gen. Patton's boys on Sunday, 29 April 1945. There is no forgetting that day! The General himself, pearl handles and all, entered camp on Tuesday the 1st of May, too a brief look around, made a few remarks, then took off in his Jeep.

We were assigned to small groups and after a couple of days taken via GI trucks to Landshut and flown in C-47s to RAMP Camp at LeHavre, France. Kind of nice to leave it all behind. But I have not forgotten my eight crewmen who did not make it.

Editor's Note: Marsh Button is alive and well and recently helped YAF acquire the new computer system that now brings you "Hangar Happenin's." He also creates beautiful RC (radio-controlled) model aircraft. He's shown above, manning an air-sea rescue canoe, with his radio-controlled Piper J-3, which has flown successfully off water.

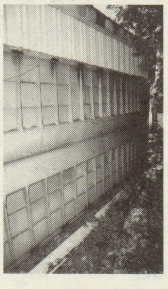
NEW FLAPS

These wing flaps are from B-17G-110-VE 44-85794. This aircraft's serial number is 35 numbers lower than the serial number of the *Yankee Lady* and it was delivered one month earlier in June 1945. The aircraft was stored at Rome, New York, and was declared surplus on 12 October 45.



'794 was assigned to the *Reconstruction Finance Corporation* and flown to Altus, Oklahoma, where many World War II aircraft were eventually scrapped. This plane survived and during the spring of 1947 was flown to Croswell, Michigan, which is north of Port Huron. It apparently became a war memorial and was later scrapped.

Several years ago, the YAF acquired the tail wheel structure from this aircraft. During October 1999, the two wing flaps were donated. For many years they were mounted one on top of the other and used as a privacy fence and wind break alongside a pool!



YAF maintenance chief and C-47 crew chief state that these flaps are in better condition than those that were on our B-17 when it arrived from Arizona in 1986. Present plans are to preserve them from any further corrosion and to place them in longer term storage.

— Todd Hackbarth

WORLD RADIAL ENGINE SYMPOSIUM

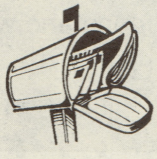
by Norm Ellickson
and Fred Lockwood

This symposium was held October 7-8-9, 1999 at Everett, Washington, and was presented by the *Precision Aviation Product Corporation*. It consisted of a 2-day workshop and a third day going through their overhaul facility. It was very well-attended by about 100 maintenance personnel, many from as far away as Australia, Norway, Sweden, South Africa, Alaska, Canada, and South America.

The many topics discussed were the care and maintenance of big round engines, which included cylinder problems, carburetion, ignition, aircraft fuels and oils. A lot of time was also spent on operating procedures. In their shop we saw all the steps that are taken to overhaul an engine, plus a Pratt & Whitney 2800 engine being run up in the test cell.

Overall, it was very informative and time well spent. Some good tips were obtained.

WE GET LETTERS!



*YAF member **Ken Young** went to the recent airshow in Delaware, Ohio. To get his own air-to-air photos of **Yankee Lady**, he bought a ride in a T-6 that was there from Goshen, Indiana. As a favor to one of our flight experience patrons that day, Ken sent copies of his photographs to Anthony Livick of Fairlawn, Ohio, who had waited a long time to fly in our B-17! Mr. Livick's letter of thanks to Ken is reprinted for you here:*

October 16, 1999

Dear Ken:

I did enjoy the flight in *Yankee Lady,* and the presence of the T-6 enhanced the effect. Now I have your photographs, and really appreciate the shots you took of the B-17. I do recognise you as the person at the desk when I signed up early in the day when there were only two other "customers." I missed a flight in *Yankee Lady* last year in Cleveland; missed again in Lorain, Ohio earlier this year when no more than two passengers were recruited; and a possible ride on a photo shoot at Elmira, NY in September failed to materialize. Well, I finally made it on October 3, and your pictures provide a valued addition to my collection.

It was very thoughtful of you to send me the photographs. Thanks again. Although I live some distance from Willow Run, I've made it to the Yankee Air Force Museum twice in the past couple of years, and hope to meet you there sometime before too long. By the time you get this letter I shall be in England, unfortunately by way of a Boeing 757 and not a Flying Fortress.

With kind regards.

Sincerely,
Anthony Livick

October 11, 1999

Dear Roger Peterson:

At a recent annual reunion held in Tacoma, Washington, our members approved a contribution of $500 for the Yankee Air Museum. At the reunion, Duck Pollack made an excellent presentation describing the activities of the Yankee Air Museum.

Enclosed is our check in the amount of $500 to enhance the display and presentation of the 305th Bombardment Group (H) at the museum.

I hope to visit the Museum sometime in the near future and look forward to meeting you.

With best wishes,
C. Arnold (Arnie) Carlson
Treasurer

c: J. Hugh Pollack
M. Lerner, President
305th BG (H) Memorial Association

Ken Young received yet another thank you card for his air-to-air photos. Also enclosed was a check for $20 which Ken donated to the B-17 fund.

Dear Ken,

Thank you for the marvelous photos of a memorable flight experience. It was quite thrilling to fly on a B-17.

My husband went last year and has his flight experience certificate and photos hanging in our office. Your wonderful photos will make my display far better than the snapshots I took.

Sincerely,
Sheila Mansfield

Ken, you may have to start a fan club! Here is a letter received by Bernie Hallman in Membership:

Dear Yankee Air Force:

On October 3, 1999, I had the rare pleasure of a Flight Experience in your B-17 *Yankee Lady* which was visiting the Delaware, Ohio Municipal Airport Fly-In.

I would say it was a tremendous thrill, but that would be such an understatement. It was a chance to fulfill a dream I thought beyond reach. I can only say "Thank You" to all your crewmembers that have put their skills, sweat and (no doubt) cash into restoring this great airplane.

Almost immediately upon reserving my spot for the flight, my camera began to malfunction. I mentioned to your crewmember that I was going to run into town and buy a camera, rather than miss the photo opportunity. He quickly said it was not necessary and loaned me his camera to use while enjoying the Fly-In, as well as during the Flight Experience. He even made sure I had two fresh rolls of film to use. I had a small chance to assist him by snapping some shots of him in a T-6 as he flew escort next to the *Yankee Lady*.

The generosity of your crewmember, Ken Young, was beyond any expectations I could have imagined. Please consider this my public "Thank You" to Ken for his assistance, and I hope you will take a minute at your next meeting to acknowledge his thoughtfulness.

Keep Her Flyin'

Donald Oney
Hilliard, Ohio

And one last letter from an appreciative member:

8 Oct 99

Sirs,

I visited your wonderful museum on 10 Aug 99 and I really enjoyed myself. I've been a member since January '94. It makes me feel good that I belong to an organization such as this; when I toured the museum it made me see what a fine organization I belong to. This is not only a place of work, it is a place of remembrance to those who served and died for our wonderful country. Keep up the excellent work. You not only preserve the past, you help represent the veterans of all the fronts. I say THANK YOU!

Harlan Pernu, Jr.
AS 04514 MM

Did we say last letter? Incoming!

November 3, 1999

To the Editors of *Hangar Happenin's* Bill Abbott & Evelyn Rouse and to Mr. W. L. Hanney, YAF President:

The *Hangar Happenin's* November '99 issue has finally gotten around to answer some of the many issues that have developed in the Mid-Michigan Divison over the past several months if not the last few years.

The letters printed showing support for the YAF against the one dismissed member and his few cohorts restored our faith once again in the total membership of the YAF.

Sincerely,

A Past Mid-Michigan Divison Member and Council Member

Robert E. McKay
Lapeer, Michigan
#0486 WU

FLYING

I often wondered what flying
would be like?
If flying is as free as a bird on
the end of the wind, or is flying
being free as a kite
Caught in midair,
I often wondered what it would
be like to fly, to be free and sail
On the wind of the air.
Or is flying just a dream of
mine, I wonder if so?
Or will my dream come true,
will I fly some day soon!
Will that day ever come,
That's a question to ask?
The wild blue yonder is for me.

- Harlan R. Pernu, Jr.

New Members !

WILLOW RUN DIVISION

ADDRISI, Peter
AMMAN, William E.
BARBIER, Douglas R.
BIESTEK, Robert
BROZNICK, Albert J.
COLF, Elden
DIENER-BOTTLE, Vita E.
FRANK, Neil A.
GEISLER, Donald
HOLT, John C.
KAY, Art
KORTE, Fred J.
MEREDITH, Earl L.
MILLER, James H.
MILLER, Marcia J.
NYQUIST, Paul F.
O'NEAL, Gerald F.
OROZCO, Pedro
PAUL, John
PIOCH, Clay
SYTSMA, Edwin

WURTSMITH DIVISION

CHINNECK, Wayne
HOOK, Stephen C.

Pilot Profiles:

Name: **RAY HUNTER**

Year and plane you officially or unofficially soloed (information will not knowingly be supplied to any FAA official) 1961: Allegheny County Airport, Pittsburgh, PA, in an Aeronca Champion, a tail-dragging ground looper. Yes, I did get in the grass a time or two! At the time, I was a cadet in the AFROTC program at the University of Pittsburgh.

Total hours (or best guess) Fixed Wing: 6,000+ (5000 military) **Rotor:** 1000 including 227 combat hours in South Vietnam where I was a Flight Instructor and Operations Officer for Detachment 6, 38th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron (MAC) as part of the Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service whose motto was and is "That Others May Live".

List of planes flown (or as many as CRS will permit)

Civilian: Cessnas, Beeches, and Pipers, etc.

Military: C-47, Convair T-29B, C & D, Convair C-131A, D & E, Cessna T-37B, Lockheed T-33A, Boeing KB-50J

Rotor: Bell UH-1 (several models) Kaman HH-43B & F

Air carriers flown for or companies you have flown for: (Current aviation position and primary aircraft you are flying) None

Favorite aircraft and/or warbird:

My favorite airplane is and always will be the Douglas Commercial Three.

Favorite aircraft and/or warbird to fly:

My favorite airplane is and always will be the Douglas Commercial Three

Hardest aircraft(s) to fly (including any you crashed or bailed out of):

The hardest plane to fly well is the DC-3.

Most memorable/beautiful flight(s) (departure and destination, year, plane flown etc.)

I have had many memorable fixed wing flights. A recent one is my first landing in the *Yankee Doodle Dandy.* I had not flown a C-47 since late 1966. Dick Bodycombe was kind and brave enough to hand over the controls to me.

Most harrowing flight(s) (departure and expected destination, plane flown etc.)

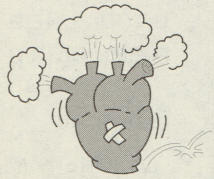
Probably my most memorable flight in helicopters came in Vietnam on an early morning mission to an allegedly safe area. Winston Churchill's statement that "Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result" was most appropriate on that day.

Another flight that involved a great deal of pucker time was a departure from Dobbins AFB in GA in a Convair 240 in marginal weather and near maximum gross weight conditions. Soon after I gave the gear up signal the left engine sputtered and promptly came apart under the cowling. We were able to feather the engine before all the oil leaked out. We declared an emergency, established a very modest single engine rate of climb of 100-200 FPM to radar traffic pattern altitude and were in radio contact with the Navy Dobbins GCA for a precision approach back to the runway we had just departed. On downwind, all radios and the intercom failed. Luckily for us, Lockheed Aircraft Corporation at Dobbins had an unpublished ILS that was being used to test instrument approach and auto-land systems in the C-130 and C-5 aircraft. Squadron policy was to always use the Lockheed ILS as a backup to all GCAs when it was on the air. We continued the approach to the outer marker and shot the Lockheed ILS and landed with one engine and a load of very happy passengers.

Fastest plane you've flown or flown in and Mach number achieved, and slowest you've flown or flown in: Lockheed T-33A, and a glider with a stall speed of 19 MPH.

Military affiliation (if Navy carrier, total number of traps:

I completed Air Force Jet Pilot training in 1963 at Craig AFB, AL, and AF Helicopter Pilot training in 1969.



The Zipper Club has a new member ...

FRED LOCKWOOD would like to thank his many friends and members of the Yankee Air Force who have called and sent many get well cards and wishes. His quadruple heart bypass surgery went well, but Linda, he does feel like he was in a train wreck! Thanks again YAF!

Nancy Lockwood

A Special Request —

Recently the staff of your newsletter received a request from one of the staff of the Library of the State of Michigan. They asked if they could be put on our mailing list and the cost of a subscription. We obviously replied that they would become one of our VIP subscribers.

What was really special to us, though, was their request for all of the back issues of *Hangar Happenin's* so that they may be bound and put on the shelves at the library for everyone to use.

It is pretty obvious that someone let these people know about us, and we appreciate any help someone gave in getting us noticed. Everyone who has ever been involved with the newsletter has always tried to give the membership of our organization their best. It is, however, a singular honor for us to be asked to do this. Our sincerest thanks to our Mystery Fan who recommended us.

— **The *HH* Staff**

New Telephone System

During this fall, the Yankee Air Museum had a new telephone system installed. This system was installed by *CTS/ Unitel.* All of the existing telephone instruments were replaced, as was all of the wiring. We increased the number of outside lines to four lines. The system allows us to make calls between phones, and allows each phone to access the P. A. system. Each phone can put calls on hold and there is a privacy feature built in that prevents anyone from picking up a line that you are on from hearing anything. Each phone can conference calls.

Installed shortly after the phones, but as part of the same system, is the Voice Response system and Voice Mail system. The Voice Response system gives a caller a menu of choices as to where he wants his call routed. This allows a caller to direct his call to where he wants it to go and does not require us to handle the call. If the caller doesn't make a choice or chooses to dial "0", the call will default to the tour desk. The Voice Mail system allows messages to be left for either individuals or their departments. If you have a message left for you, you can listen to it, save it, delete it, or forward it with or without comments. At this time, something like 125 mail boxes have been assigned. If you feel that you need a mailbox, let me know and I will arrange to have one assigned to you.

One other need surfaced with the implementation of the telephone system: a Telephone Directory. With the help of Bob Seaton, I created one and have distributed one to each of the telephones. Any questions, see me and I will try to answer and /or demonstrate the procedure.

— Don Burke

The following members of the Yankee Air Force have passed away —

John L. Murphy
#6351 WR

George F. Ruhman
#4791 WR

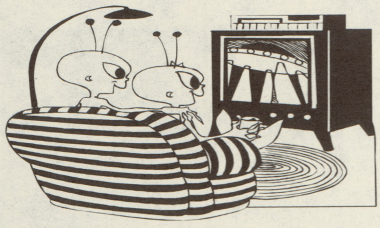
GIFT SHOP SPECIALS

For the month of December Members Only 20% Discount On all YAF Gift Shop Merchandise!

Christmas Special:

Our T-Shirts normally priced at $18 will be on sale during the month of December 2 for $30

New Item! *Yankee Lady* B-17 Shot Glasses Available now! Happy New Year!



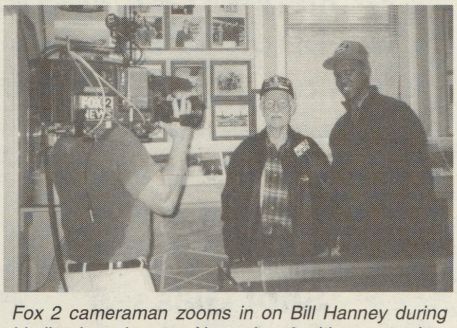
LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!
by John Day

On Saturday, November 6, 1999, the ***Fox 2*** television crew visited Yankee Air Museum for live cut-ins during their morning show seen from 8-10 AM.

Andy Szerdi of our Tour Desk was interviewed on the air as to his involvement in the war effort of World War II and the history of the Willow Run Bomber Plant. ***Fox 2*** also toured and did live shots inside the B-17. They interviewed Bill Hanney, our President, about his war service. They did exterior shots of the B-52 and our airpark.

Reporter Lee Thomas toured the museum exhibit rooms, and did a live shot of the photograph upstairs of Andy Szerdi's B-24 crew. An interesting fact everyone learned was that Andy was only 19 years old at the time the photo was made, and the Liberator's pilot was 22, their oldest crew member.

Our thanks to ***Fox 2 News*** for featuring us!



Fox 2 cameraman zooms in on Bill Hanney during his live interview on November 6 with reporter Lee Thomas for their Saturday morning TV show.

Crabby Notes —

Well, the two intrepid wannabe webmasters have completed and posted their first attempt at web site building. Yours truly Capt. Crabby (Bob Seaton) and his Monster (Don Burke) completely redid all the web pages. We think in all modesty it looks good. We would really appreciate as many members as possible take a look and let us know what you think:

www.yankeeairmuseum.org

Save yourselves the postage and send us an e-mail off the last page of the site. I'll have more about this next month, as a good many people need to be thanked for all their help with this.

On another subject: one of our Willow Run Division members, David Schrader, wanted us to tell all the pilots in the group that our neighbor *Signature* next door now has a vending machine for flight charts. They can supply both VFR and IFR charts. So if you're in the area and need a chart, it will help a business here on the field. Might help if you let them know you are a member of Yankee Air Force.

Mrs. George Binson wanted us to let you know that her husband was recently hospitalized, but is now at home recovering. George, if you remember, used the newsletter to get some information on his instructor at the aviation school at Detroit City Airport. He would probably appreciate some contact from his friends. Get better, George — you owe me another article!!

Lastly, but never least: our intrepid man in the library, Harold Sherman, asks anyone who was a member of the Tailhook Association and has copies of *The Hook: Journal of Naval Aviation*, the library would appreciate the donation of your copies.

Capt. Crabby — Bob Seaton

Hope you come and join in the fun !

Our Annual YAF Christmas Party will be held on Saturday evening December 11, 1999 beginning at 7 PM in the "Dog House" meeting room in the hangar.

Please bring a pot luck dish to pass.

We always have great food and great fun with great friends … and a surprise guest !

So you'd better be good!

— Debbie Stewart

A Soldier's Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone, in a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney with presents to give, and to see just who in this home did live.

I looked all about, a strange sight I did see: no tinsel, no present, not even a tree.

No stocking by the mantel, just boots filled with sand, on the walls hung pictures of far distant lands.

With medals and badges, awards of all kinds, a sober thought came through my mind.

For this house was different, it was dark and dreary, I found the home of a soldier, once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone, curled up on the floor in this one bedroom home.

The face was gentle, the room in such disorder, not how I pictured a United States soldier.

Was this the hero of whom I'd just read? Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?

I realized the families that I saw this night, owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight.

Soon around the world, the children would play, and grownups would celebrate a bright Christmas day.

They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year, because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.

I couldn't help wonder how many were alone, on a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home.

The very thought brought a tear to my eye. I dropped to my knees and started to cry.

The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice, "Santa don't cry, this life is my choice:

I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more, My life is my God, my Country, my Corps."

The soldier rolled over and drifted to sleep. I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.

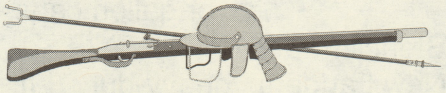
I kept watch for hours, so silent and still, and we both shivered from the cold night's chill.

I didn't want to leave on the cold, dark, night, this guardian of honor so willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure, whispered,

"Carry on, Santa. It's Christmas Day. All is secure."

I looked at my watch, and I knew he was right.
"Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good night."



Note: This poem was written by a Marine stationed in Okinawa, Japan. The following is his request. I think it is reasonable…

PLEASE. Would you do me a kind favor of sending this to as many people as you can? Christmas will be here soon and credit is due to our U.S. service men and women for our being able to celebrate these festivities. Let's try in this small way to pay a tiny bit of what we owe. Make people stop and think of our heroes, living and dead, who sacrificed themselves for us. Please, do your part to plant this small seed.

Submitted by Bob Paul
USMC 1962-1966
YAF #5339 WR

Do you have any holiday ornaments of airplanes or Santa flying?

YAF will be decorating a Christmas tree for **Belleville Festival of Holiday Trees**.

Our theme is *"Flight—from Wright to Santa's Night."*

Please tag your ornaments with your name and leave in the YAF Gift Shop . They will be returned.

Want List

The following list are items that we are in need of for restorations, etc. If any of you have any of these items you would like to donate, contact the museum. We will keep this list updated each month.

Rags
Sandpaper: wet or dry
Zinc Chromate: spray or gallon cans
Stencil Paper
New Ladders: heavy-duty 8-ft.
Air Stairs
Brooms: push
Work gloves: cloth
Plastic gloves
Drop lights: fluorescent - with ballast in cord not plug
Scotch Brite pads
Masking Tape (3M)
Duct Tape
Primer: spray cans
Kerosene cans
Propane heater
Wing-walk safety material
Knee pads
Safety glasses
Industrial vacuum for hangar floor
Professional man-lift
Pole barn 40x60

Bill Rodgers (knot-tying expert) would like to invite all members who are interested to attend the first fabric class of the year. The class will start on Saturday, December 11, 1999 in the "Skonk Works" next to the Engine Room. Classes will begin at 9 AM. You will learn how to do fabric covering of one of the parts of the CG-4 glider. Contact Bill at the museum if you need further information.

YANKEE AIR FORCE
P.O. BOX 590
BELLEVILLE, MI 48112-0590

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PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS ON THE LABEL, AND IF YOU HAVE ANY CHANGES, NOTIFY THE MEMBERSHIP OFFICE.